



NHRS Bulletin Board

NEW HAMPSHIRE RETIREMENT SYSTEM

A Newsletter for NHRS Participating Employers

Number 29 • November 2005

Identification of Wage and Contribution Reports

The new upload method for sending monthly report files has been implemented, and the New Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS) no longer is accepting XML files via email.

Especially when using this new transmission method, it is essential that all employers follow the protocols for proper use of their assigned Employer ID numbers in the file's name and in the file's header record. NHRS must have an accurately reported Employer ID to identify the employer who sent a file.

Each month's file must be named with the Employer ID number and the XML file extension. Thus, if the Employer ID is 2222, the file name should be 2222.xml and should contain no other characters. Dates, spaces, and additional identifiers must be removed from the name before the file is uploaded. Since each Employer ID is assigned to a specific employer and never changes, the file name should never change from month to month.

NHRS no longer is accepting XML files via email.

When activating the upload process, take care to avoid attaching a second extension to an XML file.

If the file is named 2222.xml.xml, for example, it will be rejected during the upload and will not be advanced to the queue for batch processing.

Finally, each file must contain an accurate Employer ID number in the header record. The Employer ID field should contain only the assigned four-digit number, 2222 in this example. There should be no zeroes, spaces, or other characters in the field preceding and/or following the four-digit number.

The Employer ID number is an essential tool for employer identification. To prevent processing delays and misidentification of files, please follow the above instructions when using the Employer Reporting System website to upload XML files.

NHRS Help Desk: 1-877-917-6477 x285

NHRS Law Book

As a courtesy to its participating employers, NHRS is providing each employer with a copy of the 2005 NHRS statutory provisions book ("law book"), which has been included with this newsletter. Employers are asked to retain a copy of the law book as a reference. Typically town administrators, finance directors or personnel managers find the law book to be a helpful resource.

NHRS is governed by statute (NH RSA 100-A) and the administrative rules promulgated by the NHRS Board of Trustees. Both the statutes and rules may be accessed from the NHRS web site at <http://www.nh.gov/retirement/rulesregs.html>.

A copy of the NHRS retiree newsletter has also been included with this newsletter to provide employers with information about the medical subsidy and COLAs. The retiree newsletter was mailed to all NHRS retirees in September 2005.

Minimum Participation Standards For Teachers

Teachers of school districts who are under contract to work in an NHRS-eligible position as certified by the employer for at least 30 hours per week throughout the school year must be enrolled in NHRS as a *teacher member*. While many school districts have varying definitions for "part-time" and "full-time" teachers (for example, "85% teacher"), the standard for NHRS membership is based on a minimum of 30 hours per week.

In situations where a teacher is not able to work the entire school year (for example, as a result of a medical leave of absence), and another teacher is hired to fill-in for the long-term absence, each must be enrolled as a *teacher member* of NHRS if he or she is under contract to work at least 30 hours per week on a regularly scheduled basis for the portion of the school year in which employed by the district.

Continued on page 2 - see *TEACHERS*:

NHRS Bulletin Board - November 2005

School District Paraprofessionals When to Enroll Employees in NHRS

School district paraprofessionals in NHRS are enrolled as *employee members*, not *teacher members*. Paraprofessionals include those employees who work in support positions requiring direct involvement with students, such as teacher aides, special education assistants, health assistants, and other similar support positions. Individuals who hold positions that do not require direct student involvement and support, such as custodians, cafeteria workers and secretaries, are not considered paraprofessionals; however, those positions are also considered to be in the *employee* classification for NHRS membership purposes.

Generally, if a school district has elected to have its *employees* participate in NHRS, then for enrollment purposes an individual must be occupying an NHRS-eligible position as certified by the employer, be working at least 35 hours per week on a regular basis and be receiving at least one full-time benefit if the employer offers full-time benefits to its other employees. However, a 2002 change in law added NH RSA 100-A:20, I-a that allows school districts to *elect* to have the minimum participation standards for enrollment of teachers, referred to hereafter as the “30-hour standard”, also apply to their paraprofessionals (see related article, page 1). School districts must notify NHRS *in writing* of their election to allow paraprofessionals to join NHRS based on the 30-hour standard and the effective date of that election.

If a school district has elected to have the 30-hour standard apply to paraprofessionals, then a paraprofessional will qualify for NHRS membership if occupying an NHRS-eligible position as certified by the employer and working at least 30 hours per week on a regular basis as a paraprofessional. For those paraprofessionals who satisfy the 30-hour standard as of the effective date of the district’s election but who are not already enrolled in NHRS, membership in NHRS is optional. For all other paraprofessionals who subsequently work for the

district in an NHRS-eligible position for at least 30 hours per week on a regular basis, NHRS membership is mandatory.

Any paraprofessional for whom NHRS

membership is optional and who joins NHRS within one year of the effective date of the district’s election of the 30-hour standard for paraprofessionals may purchase service credit for certain prior service with that district. The prior service eligible for purchase is

limited to the period(s) during which the member worked for the district on a regular basis for at least 30 hours per week as a paraprofessional. For more information about purchasing such prior service, visit the NHRS web site at:

<http://www.nh.gov/retirement/credsvc.html> and review the section entitled “Modifications”.

For more information about enrolling paraprofessionals under the 30-hour standard, please call 1-877-917-6477 x266.

School districts may *elect* to have their paraprofessionals participate in NHRS based on the minimum participation standards for teachers...

TEACHERS - continued from page 1:

The only exception to the 30 hours per week standard is for 50-50 job share teachers, where two teachers equally share one full-time NHRS-eligible teaching position that, except for the job sharing arrangement, requires a minimum of 30 hours per week. For example, both teachers who share a 30-hour per week NHRS-eligible teaching position would be classified as 50-50 job share teachers if each works 15 hours per week. However, if one of those two teachers sharing that teaching position worked only 10 hours per week and the other worked 20 hours per week, neither teacher would qualify as a 50-50 job share teacher and neither may be enrolled in NHRS. NHRS enrollment of 50-50 job share teachers is mandatory.

Please note that the NHRS provisions concerning 50-50 job share positions apply only to *teachers*. The law does not contain comparable provisions for paraprofessionals or other employees who share a position with another person.

This publication provides general information only. The New Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS) is governed by NH RSA 100-A and the rules and regulations promulgated by the NHRS Board of Trustees. In the event of any conflict between this publication and the laws, rules and regulations that govern NHRS, the laws, rules and regulations will prevail. Contact NHRS at 1-877-917-6477 with any questions.